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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION IV

345 COURTLAND STREET
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30365

10428

ACTION MEMORANDUM

Date: SEP 14 1988

Subject: Emergency Removal Request for Prairie Metals Site,
Prairie, MSFrom: Kelly S. McCarty,
On-Scene Coordinator*Kelly S. McCarty*To: Greer C. Tidwell,
Regional Administrator, Region IVPURPOSE

This memorandum is for authorization to proceed with a removal for \$685,000 for the Prairie Metals Site in Prairie, MS. A significant threat to public health and the environment exists at this time, and may worsen if response is delayed.

BACKGROUND

The facility is sited on a defunct Army ammunition plant that is currently owned jointly by the City of Aberdeen and the 4th District Supervisors of Munroe County. Prairie Metals and Chemicals Company leased the property and engaged in electrolytic production of chromium metal from high-carbon ferrochrome from 1973 until February, 1977. They also produced ferrous ammonium sulfate (FAS), which was used by the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station at Prairie as an experimental fertilizer until the Mississippi Department of Natural Resources directed Prairie Metals to cease production. Prairie Metals and Chemical Company went out of business in February, 1977.

In July, 1977, Systems Services and Industrial Corporation (SSIC) of Savannah, GA. acquired the lease on the property. SSIC attempted to bring the facility into compliance with all the state permits; however, they failed and ceased operations in mid-1981 (without ever getting past the pilot stage).

A. Incident or Site Setting Description

1. Physical location - The site is located 1 1/4 miles east of Prairie, MS, off Highway 382, adjacent to an inactive Army ammunition plant. The facility is surrounded by farmland, but is in the center of the wellfield serving the City of Aberdeen. Seven wells are within 1 mile of the site.

-2-

2. General character of site - Two buildings remain on site; one of which is piled 2 - 3 feet high with ferrous ammonium sulfate (FAS) which is high in chromium. Two on-site ponds also have contamination in the water and in the sediments.
3. Waste management - Waste management practices are currently non-existent.
4. Surrounding Area - The surrounding area is generally rural; however, the site is in the center of the City of Aberdeen wellfield which serves as the primary drinking water source for over 7000 people. The wells are all within one mile of the site.

B. Quantity and Type of Substances Present -

Approximately 300,000 gallons of water contaminated with significant levels of chromium are present on the site. One water sample contained 3,000 ppb of chromium. An unknown number of drums are buried in at least two areas on site and approximately 100 cubic yards of FAS is located in an on-site building. FAS is high in chromium and arsenic, and samples taken of the soil on the site have shown chromium in concentrations up to 100,000 ppm and arsenic up to 69 ppm.

- C. Is the site on the NPL? If so, when is later remedial action expected?

The site is not on the NPL.

THREAT

A. Threat of Exposure to Public or the Environment

Trespassers could come into direct contact with the FAS, and the potential exists for the FAS to run off the property onto surrounding property and into Hang Kettle Creek. Some buried material could leach into groundwater and contaminate the nearby drinking water wells (although wells serving the City of Aberdeen are deep and protected by confining layers). The on-site lagoon is highly contaminated with chromium, which is deadly to many small animals. The pond also poses a direct contact threat to the many farm animals in the area and any children that might be playing on the site.

-3-

B. Evidence of Extent of Release

Samples taken from downstream in Hang Kettle Creek showed elevated levels of arsenic, chromium, and lead in the sediment. A sample taken upstream of the site did not show elevated levels of any contaminant.

C. Previous Actions to Abate Threat

Prior to abandonment of the site, SSIC performed several state specified and supervised cleanups. Activities included placing contaminated machinery, and drums of FAS into on-site settling ponds which were then filled with lime and covered.

D. Current Actions to Abate Threat

None

ENFORCEMENT

See Attachment

PROPOSED PROJECT AND COST**A. Objectives of the project**

To pump and treat contaminated pond water;
To dispose of FAS from building; and
To investigate and cleanup burial areas, if necessary.

B. Extramural Costs

Cleanup Contractors	\$ 500,000
TAT Costs	75,000
NCLP Analytical Services	-
ERT/IT Study	-
Plus 15% Contingency	85,000
Total, Extramural Costs	\$ <u>660,000</u>

Intramural Costs

Intramural Direct Costs (30 X 300 hours)	\$ 10,000
Intramural Indirect Costs \$54 X 250)	15,000
Total Intramural Costs	<u>25,000</u>
TOTAL SITE BUDGET	

\$ 685,000

-4-

C. Project ~~Schedule~~

Begin: September 19, 1988

End: December 1, 1988

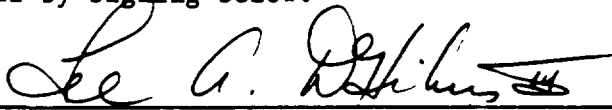
D. If applicable, describe how actions will be consistent with remedial plan.

N/A.

REGIONAL RECOMMENDATION

Because conditions at the Prairie Metals Site meet the NCP Section 300.65 criteria for removal, I recommend your approval of the removal request. The estimated total project costs are \$ 685,000 of which \$ 500,000 are for extramural cleanup contractor costs. You may indicate your approval or disapproval by signing below.

Approve:



Date:

9/14/88

Disapprove: _____

Date: _____

ENFORCEMENT

Notice letters were mailed on August 20, 1987, to all PRP's with the following results.

Owners of the Property:

Both the City of Aberdeen and the 4th Supervisors District of Munroe County indicated their willingness to help and support EPA in any way possible; however, neither had the funds to perform the cleanup.

Operators of the Site:

System Services and Industrial Corporation (SSIC) claimed that they did little to no production of material during their tenure at the site. All they did was to attempt to clean-up the waste left by Prairie Metals and Chemicals Corporation. SSIC felt that they had done all they should already and would not do anything more.

Prairie Metals and Chemical Corporation is apparently no longer an operating company. Mr. Denver Harris, Ex-President of Prairie Metals indicated that all assets were sold to Vicksburg Chemical in 1977, which is a division of Vertac Chemical. He claimed no responsibility/liability.